

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SAA-01 SES-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 /093 W
-----028811 151951Z /73

R 141033Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9668
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 05393

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, SY
SUBJECT: DEPFONMIN QADDOUR ON PEACE PROCESS

SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF MEETING SEPT 13 QADDOUR OUTLINED FAMILIAR SYRIAN POSITION ON PEACE PROCESS AND SADAT INITIATIVES. HE REGRETTED LACK OF PROGRESS AND STRESSED REPEATEDLY SYRIA'S DESIRE FOR PEACE AND NEED FOR PALESTINIAN AND GENERAL ARAB REPRESENTATION IN NEGOTIATIONS. THEN HE LAPSED INTO UNUSUALLY FRANK ASSESSMENT OF SLIM CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF ANY POSSIBLE FUTURE GENEVA CONFERENCE BETWEEN A NUMBER OF HIGHLY DIVERSE PARTIES IF SADAT, BEGIN AND PRESIDENT CARTER--WITH RELATIVELY SYMPATHETIC VIEWS--ARE UNABLE TO CAP THEIR EFFORTS WITH SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A CALL ON QADDOUR, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER,
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SEPTEMBER 13, TO INTRODUCE NEW ARN DIRECTOR WAT CLUVERIUS, QADDOUR INQUIRED ABOUT THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT AND RESTATED THE SYRIAN POSITION ON PEACE. IN THAT CONNECTION HE DESCRIBED SYRIAN OBJECTIVES AS FULL WITHDRAWAL, REALIZATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND ATTAINMENT OF TRUE CONDITIONS OF PEACE. HE CLASSIFIED THE LATTER AS MEANING AN END TO THE STATE

OF WAR. QADDOUR SAID THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, SADAT HAS ACHIEVED NOTHING BY HIS SEPARATE INITIATIVE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HIS INITIATIVE HAS FRAGMENTED THE ARABS. MEANWHILE, ISRAEL HAS OPENED DOORS TO EGYPT, TO JORDAN AND TO LEBANON. QADDOUR SPOKE IN FAMILIAR TERMS OF THE NEED FOR AN AREA BALANCE AND SADAT HAD UPSET THIS BALANCE.

2. QADDOUR SAID THAT A SATISFACTORY AND LASTING PEACE CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BETWEEN THE ARABS AS A WHOLE AND ISRAEL, NOT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL ALONE. IT ALSO HAD TO INCLUDE THE PLO. HE CATALOGUED THE EFFORTS PRIOR TO SADAT'S INITIATIVE TO MOVE TO GENEVA. HE BLAMED ISRAEL FOR THE FAILURE AT THAT TIME BECAUSE OF ITS REJECTION OF ANY PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION, INCLUDING THE CONCEPT OF FOLDING THE PLO INTO AN ARAB OR JORDANIAN DELEGATION. QADDOUR THEN DEFENDED THE LOGIC OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT ANY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH PURPORT TO RESOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE SINCE THE CORE OF THE DISPUTE IS THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION.

3. QADDOUR THEN LAPSED INTO PERSONAL PESSIMISM. HE SAID THAT SADAT HAS GONE TO JERUSALEM, HAD MADE MAJOR CONCESSIONS TO BEGIN AND PRESIDENT CARTER AND HAD PUT HIS PERSONAL PRESTIGE ON THE LINE. IF SADAT AND BEGIN, WHILE MEETING TOGETHER UNDER THESE CONDITIONS CAN COME TO NO AGREEMENT, HOW WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR ANY AGREEMENT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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COME OUT OF GENEVA, WHERE MANY VOICES ARE REPRESENTED AND AMONG THEM THOSE NOT SO SYMPATHETIC TO BEGIN AS SADAT'S? QADDOUR MENTIONED WALDHEIM'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW YORK PREPARATORY MEETING FOR GENEVA IF SADAT'S INITIATIVE FAILED. BUT THE ARAB POSITION OF DENYING BOTH LAND AND PEACE IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH WHAT HE VIEWED AS ISRAEL'S POSITION OF NO WITHDRAWAL WHICH, HE CLAIMED, IS EVEN SUPPORTED BY THE LABOR PARTY. HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO A PHASED PROCESS, BUT IT HAS TO BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL.

4. IN CONCLUSION, QUADDOUR AFFIRMED THAT SYRIAN-U.S. RELATIONS ARE GOOD. NATURALLY, SYRIA EVALUATES ITS RELATIONS IN TERMS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE AREA PROBLEMS AND BOTH U.S. AND SYRIAN VIEWPOINTS IN THIS REGARD ARE KNOWN. QADDOUR SAID HE FELT THE UNITED STATES COULD PLAY A MORE POSITIVE ROLE, BUT ONLY INsofar AS IT EXERTED ITS EFFORTS TOWARD AN ARAB-ISRAEL SETTLEMENT. SEELYE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PEACE, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC05393
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780376-0875
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780968/aaaacdya.tel
Line Count: 112
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 556cb350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1437880
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPFONMIN QADDOUR ON PEACE PROCESS SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF MEETING SEPT 13 QADDOUR OUTLINED FAMILIAR SYRIAN POSITION ON PEACE PROCESS AND SADA
TAGS: PEPR, PDEV, SY, LE, XF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/556cb350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014